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COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Supplementary assistance for a global project

Research, Training and Production Programme for Nutritional Quality Maize, Supported by Farm Level Surveys (GLO/78/009)

Estimated UNDP contribution:	$390 000
Duration:	Three years
Executing Agency:	UNDP

I. Background

1. At its January 1978 meetings,[1/] the Governing Council approved assistance for a project involving a research, training and production programme on nutritional quality maize, supported by farm level surveys. The project is being implemented by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico, which is part of the network of the international agricultural research centres sponsored by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The main

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*/ This document will be derestricted upon approval of the project. See document DP/526 which will be issued in June 1981.

1/ DP/PROJECTS/R.11/Add.2.

objective of CIMMYT is to promote and carry out, at national and international levels, programmes to improve the production of maize and wheat, which constitute the principal carbohydrate and protein source for nearly half the world's population.

2. As part of the CIMMYT effort to assist developing countries in the introduction of new technology for maize production, limited funds from the above UNDP project are being used to support two regional programmes in agricultural economics at the farm level, one in Eastern Africa and the other in South Asia. Both these projects are assisting national programmes with farm level studies on current farmer practices, ascertaining major restrictions to production, identifying changes which could remedy those bottlenecks and ascertaining the availability of inputs and information to farmers. The findings of these studies, in which several staff of national programmes are being trained through workshops and training courses, constitute the basis for "on-farm testing" of improved technology to enable agronomists to verify potential solutions under conditions faced by farmers and to demonstrate modifications to such solutions in the light of new information developed by the experiment stations. The farmer surveys and "on-farm" trials are designed to provide strong guidance to the national extension staff, crop scientists and national policy makers.

3. As a result of the extensive experiences of CIMMYT in agro-economic studies, including those mentioned above, it became evident that there is a deficiency in most developing countries in the communication linkages among biological scientists, social scientists and policy makers. Policy makers frequently complain about the orientation of agricultural research, challenging its relevance to national goals. Agricultural scientists criticize policy makers for their insensitivity to the complexities of biological processes and to both its potentials and limitations. Farmers operate and plan their production programmes within a complex milieu of biological, sociological and economic circumstances. Efforts to develop and to diffuse new technology frequently fail because those in charge of planning research goals or national policy guidelines often do so with little understanding of the circumstances relevant to farmers. In general, a great deal of policy related to agriculture is made in Ministries of Finance, of Planning or Commerce and by people with scant knowledge of technical relationships or farmer situations. Often unaware of the complexities of the environment and compelled by the need for urgent action, these decision makers act independently of counsel from more knowledgeable sources. Even within Ministries of Agriculture, decision makers often act without full awareness of farmers' circumstances and the interaction of those circumstances with technical relationships. Many production programmes have consequently failed because significant elements were overlooked in their formulation. Some planning organizations have attempted to deal with these problems by sophisticated computer models which, obviously, have not had the desired impact.

4. In an attempt to overcome some of the afore-mentioned problems, CIMMYT has developed an alternative strategy which relates policy goals to production systems and examines the biological factors conditioning production in these systems. It examines the farmer and his decision milieu and identifies policy decisions which condition that milieu. This approach relates national goals to production, connects existing production to biological issues, and establishes the effect of current policies on farmers' yields, production and resource allocation. Such an approach requires on-farm trials, interviews with farmers and observations of trained biological scientists and economists. With a view to sharpening the focus of farmers' circumstances and policy, CIMMYT has used UNDP assistance provided under

the present project to develop a number of case studies covering such themes as the organization of agricultural research, the production and distribution of improved seeds. the acquisition and distribution of fertilizers and the performance of markets for produce. This case study method is being tried out in specially designed seminars to bring together policy makers, biological scientists and social scientists to examine farmers' circumstances along with the biological, socio-economic and political factors which impinge on agricultural development. Materials for several case studies have already been prepared and two seminars were held in 1980, one in the Philippines and the other in Kenya, which were attended by participants from different countries with diverse professional backgrounds and job responsibilities in agricultural development activities. During the early part of 1981, three additional seminars were held. one each in Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Bangladesh. CIMMYT staff and skilled outside consultants experienced in the case study method and in agricultural production issues helped lead the various seminar sessions. Reactions from national participants in the above seminars have been favourable, since policy makers had an opportunity to share experiences and perceptions through discussions motivated by the problems presented in the cases. The seminars were considered extremely worthwhile and the materials prepared for the case studies proved to be effective.

5. In agreeing to provide limited funds for the development of case studies and the holding of a few seminars for policy makers on a trial basis, UNDP advised CIMMYT that, subject to the successful outcome of the seminars, consideration would be given to providing supplementary assistance in June 1981 so as to broaden the case study methodology and to hold a few more seminars of the type mentioned above. The present request for supplementary assistance was formulated in view of the seminars' positive results.

II. The Project

6. The main purpose of the supplementary assistance is to enable CIMMYT to develop additional materials for carefully selected case studies focusing on technological, socio-economic, supply and marketing and bureaucratic constraints to the wider, more equitable and more effective adoption of output-increasing innovations in developing countries. Based on the experiences of the seminars for policy makers in the Philippines, Kenya, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Bangladesh outlined above, additional seminars will be held during the next 2-3 years. Six seminars are scheduled for 1981-1982: consultations are presently under way with the countries interested in hosting the seminars and plans will be finalized in due course. The case studies will be prepared for specific country and subject matter situations and presented in a style which can be easily understood by planners, administrators and decision makers, thereby facilitating close interaction with biological scientists, understanding of the problems of representative farmers and appreciation of what is feasible through agricultural research. The materials in the case studies to be presented in the policy seminars will consist of specially prepared teaching notes, audio-visual aids, including slides and films, discussion papers and technical notes assembled by skilled specialists who are acquainted with current practices of farmers and notes of interviews with scientists, administrators and Government officials in national agricultural programmes. The case studies are intended to serve as the basis for discussion rather than to illustrate effective or ineffective handling of a particular administrative situation. They pose queries which may suggest possible solutions to specific problems. Each seminar includes at least one case relating to

the host country and another five or more on other developing countries. The seminars will be developed around a framework of several case studies which are adapted to the situation of the host country, and will seek to sensitize decision makers to the importance of farmers' circumstances and to the technical parameters of agriculture. The case studies will, as described in paragraph 4 above, deal with important components of national agricultural systems. These materials will be shared with other international development agencies, national Governments and institutions in developing countries.

7. While additional support requested from UNDP will be used mostly for the development and refinement of future case studies, a modest continuation of the current series of seminars for policy makers and administrators is envisaged. Further conduct of these seminars would identify additional opportunities for the development of relevant case studies: testing these case studies and procedures with experienced policy makers and administrators in the developing countries would add substantially to their utility. Although the original case studies and seminars dealt primarily with maize and wheat, the more recent studies and seminars are not commodity-oriented and they cover broad principles that are widely applicable to all crops. Since the materials already developed have been found to be an effective means to document experiences in the agriculture systems of developing countries, several international and bilateral agencies have expressed interest in the approach. In fact, some agencies are already considering the possibilities of financing the presentation of specific seminars. Consultations are already under way between CIMMYT and the International Service for National Agriculture (ISNAR), the newly established entity within the CGIAR network, to transfer the responsibility for the preparation and presentation of the case studies and the seminars to ISNAR during the course of the UNDP project. It is envisioned that future work in this area will be the responsibility of ISNAR, implemented in close collaboration with CIMMYT, other concerned CGIAR-sponsored international agricultural resarch centres, multilateral and bilateral agencies and national institutions in developing countries. ISNAR was created by the CGIAR members to provide assistance to the developing countries in planning, organizing, and managing agricultural research more effectively. This includes assistance in identifying research priorities and problems and in formulating research policies and assistance in building up an adequate institutional infrastructure as well as in promoting specific national or regional research programmes. ISNAR will work very closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), all other centres of the CGIAR system, multilateral and bilateral agencies and national Governments of developing countries.

8. The involvement of ISNAR and other agencies and institutions in the aforementioned activities will broaden the current work on case studies and seminars. UNDP assistance during the next three years will permit the development of a richer array of materials for the organization and preparation of the case studies and seminars. That array, in turn, will permit organizers to better tailor seminars to the needs of particular regions or countries, thereby enhancing the utility of each seminar. At the same time, other development assistance agencies will be approached to finance the costs of additional future seminars in which potential interest has been expressed by certain donors and, of course, many developing countries are quite interested in hosting them. It is expected that at least six such seminars will be sponsored during the course of this project. Concerned international agricultural research centres will identify potential participants, with ISNAR playing a co-ordinating role, along with relevant national and

international agencies, in their selection. As in the past, future seminars will be generally sponsored by a national agricultural institution, a post-graduate programme in agricultural sciences of a university, a management training institution or an international centre with strong regional ties.

8. Preparation for the seminars will be shared between the host Government or co-sponsor, with identification and selection of the participants being made in accordance with the arrangements stated above. A critical part of the collaboration involving CIMMYT, ISNAR, all international centres and development assistance agencies is the continuing need for the development of further case studies. Successful seminars rely on three essential ingredients: participants, discussion leaders and substantive materials. The experience gained so far by CIMMYT under the present UNDP project will contribute significantly to the preparation of such materials, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of future policy seminars. CIMMYT will have a detailed work plan prepared in consultation with all concerned for presentation to UNDP so that, immediately upon approval of the supplementary assistance requested above, project activities can be taken in hand on an expeditious basis.

9. As already provided for in the current UNDP project, the additional activities envisaged under supplementary assistance, as described above, will be reviewed by the project advisory committee as and when needed, with appropriate advice from FAO. These activities will also be reviewed by a team of independent consultants, which is scheduled to evaluate the progress and accomplishments of the present UNDP project on maize improvement at CIMMYT before its completion date by the end of March 1984.

10. The expenditure component of the proposed supplementary assistance is as follows:

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Subcontract	350,000

11. The expenditures under the project will be contained within the Indicative Planning Figure established by the Governing Council for global projects.

III. Recommendation

12. In the light of the above considerations, the Administrator recommends that:

The Governing Council,

(a) Approve this project; and

(b) Authorize the Administrator to make the appropriate arrangements with CIMMYT for the execution of this project.